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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 001050

SIPDIS

NOFORN

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SUBJECT: MEETING BETWEEN U/S DOBRIANSKY AND ITALIAN FOREIGN  
MINISTER FRATTINI, MARCH 4, 2004

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR MEL SEMBLER FOR REASONS 1.5(B) AND (D)

1. (S) SUMMARY. U/S PAULA DOBRIANSKY HELD A BILATERAL MEETING WITH FM FRATTINI ON MARCH 4 AT THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE UNDER SECRETARY RAISED FOUR ISSUES, INCLUDING THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES, THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, ECOSOC MEMBERSHIP AND MONTREAL PROTOCOL LIMITS ON METHYL BROMIDE. AMBASSADOR SEMBLER RAISED THE ISSUE OF U/S GROSSMAN'S RECENT TRIP TO EGYPT, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FM'S MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT MUBARAK LATER IN THE DAY. SEE PARA 4 FOR ACTION REQUEST.

U.S. ATTENDEES: U/S PAULA DOBRIANSKY, AMBASSADOR MEL SEMBLER, G SPECIAL ASSISTANT CHRISTIAN WHITON (NOTETAKER)

ITALY ATTENDEES: FM FRANCO FRATTINI, MINISTER CESARE RAGAGLINI, CHIEF OF STAFF TO MINISTER FRATTINI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AMBASSADOR GIANCARLO ARAGONA

END SUMMARY.

THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

2. (S) U/S DOBRIANSKY RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES BY THANKING THE FM FOR ITALY'S SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THE ISSUE. THE FM REITERATED HIS SUPPORT AND NOTED ITALY'S STRONG INTEREST IN JOINING THE COMMUNITY'S CONVENING GROUP. HE NOTED THAT ITALY HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONVENING GROUP IN THE PAST ON AN AD HOC BASIS, AND WISHED FOR ITALY TO BE A FORMAL MEMBER. U/S DOBRIANSKY NOTED THAT CHILE, THE CURRENT CHAIR, IS IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT PROCESS TO PLACE COUNTRIES IN THE CONVENING GROUP IN A METHODOICAL WAY. THE FM ACCEPTED THE NECESSITY OF THIS, AND BOTH HE AND THE UNDER SECRETARY AGREED ON THE USEFULNESS OF HAVING A MIDDLE EASTERN NATION IN THE CONVENING GROUP, IF POSSIBLE.

3. (S) AS A SUBTOPIC TO THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES DISCUSSION, U/S DOBRIANSKY SAID THAT EAST TIMOR'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ASKED FOR A GROUP OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WHICH CAN SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE IN THE RULE OF LAW, INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY MATTERS AND BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL POLICE FORCE, TO COME TO THE NATION TO CONSULT WITH THE GOVERNMENT. PORTUGAL AND MEXICO HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST, AND U/S DOBRIANSKY ASKED IF ITALY WOULD PARTICIPATE. NOTING THAT HIS NATION HAD SENT TROOPS TO EAST TIMOR, THE FM SAID ITALY WOULD ACTIVELY EXPLORE THE IDEA.

4. (S) ACTION REQUEST: FM FRATTINI REQUESTED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE INITIATIVE, AND NOTED THAT ITALY'S EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WOULD FOLLOW-UP WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

THE U.N. COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

5. (S) NEXT, U/S DOBRIANSKY RAISED THE UPCOMING UNHRC MEETING IN GENEVA. SHE SPECIFICALLY ASKED ABOUT ITALY'S WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT A CANADIAN RESOLUTION CONDEMNING IRAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF THEIR RECENT "ELECTIONS."

6. (S) THE FM RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS A SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR THEM, GIVEN THEIR "FRANK, OPEN AND CRITICAL DIALOGUE WITH IRAN." AFTER ACKNOWLEDGING IRAN'S PROBLEMS, THE FM SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO WANTED TO ISOLATE IRAN.

7. (S) U/S DOBRIANSKY PRESSED THE FM, NOTING THAT THE COMMISSION IS SEEN AS A FORUM WHERE THESE SPECIFIC ISSUES ARE TO BE DISCUSSED, AND BEING OPEN AND FRANK WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS CAN ACTUALLY BE BENEFICIAL TO ENGAGEMENT, BECAUSE IT LAYS DOWN MARKERS AND CREATES A SENSE OF CANDOR. SHE NOTED THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN DISCUSSIONS THAT INCLUDE NORTH KOREA, YET WE STILL SPONSORED A RESOLUTION ABOUT THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

8. (S) THE UNDER SECRETARY ALSO NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED WITH THE MAKEUP OF THE COMMISSION, CITING LAST YEAR'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF LIBYA, AND THE INITIAL RETICENCE OF SOME AFRICAN NATIONS TO ALLOW AUSTRALIA TO CHAIR THIS YEAR'S SESSION. U/S DOBRIANSKY RAISED COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A DEMOCRACY CAUCUS WITHIN THIS

AND OTHER UN BODIES. THIS DEMOCRACY CAUCUS, NOW COORDINATED UNDER CHILEAN LEADERSHIP, WILL PROVIDE A NETWORK FOR DEMOCRACIES TO COORDINATE THEIR VOTING ON SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS, UN DEMOCRACY INITIATIVES, AND HOPEFULLY CANDIDACIES FOR CHR AND OTHER BODIES.

19. (S) RETURNING TO THE CANADIAN RESOLUTION ON IRAN, U/S DOBRIANSKY NOTED THAT WE ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH ITALY AND

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"I AM CONVINCED ON THIS ISSUE, WE MUST BE UNITED."

ECOSOC

110. (S) U/S DOBRIANSKY BROUGHT UP THE U.N. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, AND STATED THAT WE WANTED TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRATIC NATIONS TO PARTICIPATE AND STRATEGIZE WITH ITALY IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL: WORKING IN ECOSOC TO ELECT MORE DEMOCRACIES TO THE CHR AND ECOSOC. THE FM RESPONDED THAT "WE ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SPREADING DEMOCRACY, SO WE CAN HELP."

METHYL BROMIDE

111. (S) U/S DOBRIANSKY BROUGHT UP THE TOPIC OF METHYL BROMIDE AND THE UPCOMING MEETING IN MONTREAL TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL NEED OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE TO TEMPORARILY SLOW THE PHASING OUT OF THIS CHEMICAL UNDER THE TERMS OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. THE U/S INDICATED THAT THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CRITICAL USE EXEMPTION OF 35% OF BASELINE LEVELS AND THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD ALSO BE SUBMITTING A SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST OF 2% FOR 2005. THE U/S EXPRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE LOOKING TO HAVE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION AGREE TO A MULTIYEAR APPROACH TO ESTABLISHING THE CRITICAL USE EXEMPTIONS. THE FM WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE ISSUE, AND U/S DOBRIANSKY PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW. SHE EXPLAINED THAT SHE WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH ITALIAN ENVIRONMENT MINISTER MATTEOLI, BUT THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT AND URGENT ENOUGH TO BRING IT TO HIS ATTENTION AS WELL. THE FM SEEMED INTERESTED IN THE ISSUE, AND REQUESTED MORE DETAILS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. GME/EGYPTIAN RESISTANCE

112. (S) AMBASSADOR SEMBLER BROUGHT UP RECENT DIFFERENCES THAT OCCURRED IN A MEETING IN CAIRO BETWEEN U/S GROSSMAN AND EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT MUBARAK OVER THE TOPIC OF THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE FM AND PM BERLUSCONI WERE SOON TO MEET WITH MUBARAK AND THAT HE HOPED THEY COULD HELP SMOOTH THINGS OVER. FRATTINI WAS AWARE OF THE ISSUE AND NOTED THAT AN EGYPTIAN JOURNALIST RECENTLY ASKED HIM ABOUT "THE FAILURE OF UNDER SECRETARY GROSSMAN'S VISIT." (FRATTINI ASKED THE JOURNALIST WHY HE CHARACTERIZED IT THAT WAY, TO WHICH THE JOURNALIST REPLIED THAT WAS THE GENERAL PERCEPTION IN EGYPT.) U/S DOBRIANSKY NOTED THAT SOME IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAD THE PERCEPTION THAT THE INITIATIVE WAS SOMETHING BEING IMPOSED ON THEM, WHICH IS NOT TRUE. RATHER, IT IS A WAY TO GET MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE ISSUES AND ADDRESS THEM DIRECTLY, EXPLAINED U/S DOBRIANSKY. THE FM REPLIED THAT ITALY SUPPORTS A CONSULTATIVE, NON-PATERNALISTIC APPROACH, AND WOULD TRY TO EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT IN THEIR MEETING WITH MUBARAK LATER IN THE DAY.

113. U/S DOBRIANSKY CONCLUDED THE MEETING BY NOTING HER APPRECIATION FOR ITALY'S HELP AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE A STAND ON ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THE U.S.

SEMBLER

SVC FOR MISSING NOFORN PARA'S AND PARA 13 MISSING MARKING

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SEMBLER

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